BEEHIVES

TUCSON INDIAN TRAINING SCHOOL

Escuela, Arizona

Location and History

The city of Tucson is located in an immense bowl formed by high, serrated mountains. The Tucson Indian Training School forms the fringe on the southwest corner of this attractive desert metropolis. Escuela, which is Spanish for "school," is the name of the post office.

In 1868, while Arizona was yet a territory, a United States army officer first interested the Church in the religious needs of the Pimas and Papagoes through an article which appeared in the *New York Evangelist*. This also attracted the attention of Dr. Sheldon Jackson, who visited Arizona that he might study conditions at first hand. It was Dr. Jackson who arranged for the Presbyterian Church to support Dr. Charles H. Cook, who, having himself been stirred by the article, had for ten years worked independently at Sacaton. Largely through the influence of Dr. Cook, the Woman's Executive Committee of Home Missions was persuaded to establish the Tucson Indian Training School, and the first pupils were received January 3, 1888. The school, a vacant adobe building in town, was the first of its kind in Arizona, the government maintaining the pupils, the Woman's Board, the teachers.

For a number of years the Pima and Papago tribes, similar in tradition, customs, language, and manner of living, were the only Indians admitted to the school. The first graduating class consisted of four Pimas. Gradually the influence of the school has been extended and other tribes have been admitted. This year (1937) eleven tribes are represented in an

enrollment of 158: Pima, Papago, Maricopa, Mono, Mohave, Walapai, Hopi, Navajo, Yaqui, Apache, and Zuni. There is very little "tribal superiority" manifested on the campus, and only the most experienced observer can detect any difference between the tribes.

From a two-room adobe house the Tucson Indian Training School has grown to a plant consisting of fourteen well-constructed brick buildings, five shops, and two hundred twenty-five acres of land.

Course of Study

Due largely to improved educational advantages in home communities, with the opening of elementary day schools by the Office of Indian Affairs, the Tucson Indian Training School no longer receives pupils under the fourth grade. The curriculum includes the usual subjects offered in standard schools, from grades four to ten inclusive.

Special emphasis is placed upon the more practical phases of education. Home-making in many of its branches and home nursing are stressed for the girls, while the boys are given special instruction in manual and agricultural arts. Over sixty of the older children have garden plots to care for. The aim is to equip individuals to meet conditions in the local communities on the reservations to which most of them will eventually return. Provision is made for a limited number of students who desire a higher education to attend the Tucson high school and the State University.

Bible is taught throughout the entire course at Escuela. Each year evangelistic services are held on the campus. Both boys and girls are active in the school church, composed entirely of teachers and pupils. The church maintains a hundred dollar scholarship at Sheldon Jackson School, gives $150 a year to the Mission Boards, and sends a goodly contribution toward the community work on the Papago field, in addition to buying all the literature needed for its own Sunday school. Recently a returned student, in talking to the pupils, said "While you are here in this school, a seed is planted in your hearts. You may not know it, but it is there. Later on that seed is going to grow and it will make a different person out of you. You cannot get away from it."

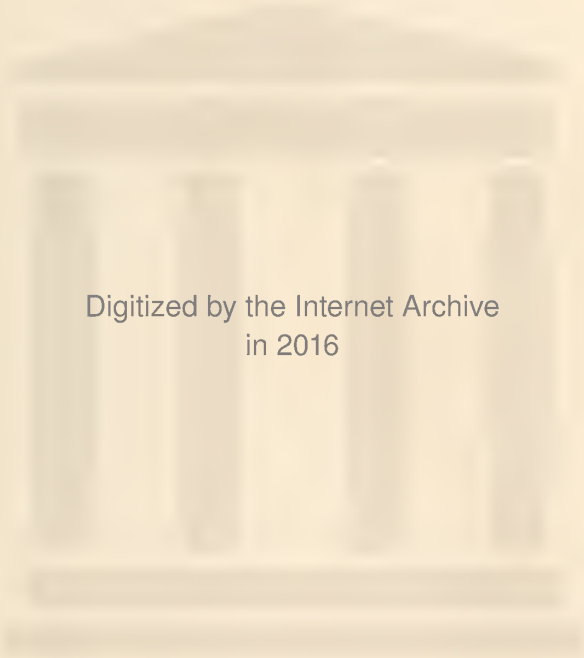
Activities off the Campus

A new school bus makes it possible for a large group of older students to go out to the churches on the Indian reservations to assist with the Sunday services. They help conduct the annual camp meetings on the Pima and Papago reservations, giving talks, leading classes, providing the music, etc. Esau Joseph, a young Pima Indian, a graduate of Escuela, the first of his tribe to be ordained to the ministry, is the main speaker for these camp meetings. In his few years of service he has already won more converts than has any one Indian minister on the reservation, the number running well over a thousand. The pupils conduct vacation Bible schools on the different reservations, and help in their local Sunday school, teaching classes and singing in the choir.

Results

For nearly half a century Tucson Indian Training School has been receiving a comparatively small number of Indian youth. Through its Christian influence they have been transformed and sent forth like "streams in the desert" to give new life to every community they enter. Of the nearly two thousand students who have received part or all of their education at the Tucson Indian Training School, not a single graduate or a pupil who has attended the school for a period of three years has ever gone forth who was not a professing Christian. They are engaged in various pursuits, although most of them have returned to their desert homes and are caring for their farms and cattle, or are in the employ of the Government. The majority of the girls have become home-makers and have greatly improved the health of the younger generation. The graduates and former students of this institution are among the most progressive and thrifty Indians on the reservations, and are active in improving local conditions in every field of endeavor. They constitute a large part of the religious leadership in every Protestant community. In the Synod of Arizona there are today more Indians than whites; most of the native ministers were formerly pupils of this school.

It is significant that the parents of over half the present student body received their education at Escuela. Many are "third generation" pupils. A splendid spirit of loyalty toward the school is exhibited by the entire Indian population served by



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this institution, regardless of whether or not they have attended Escuela.

In the beginning the missionaries went about the reservation almost pleading with parents to allow their children to come to the school. Today the number of applicants far exceeds the number whom, because of lack of facilities, the school is able to care for.

The Tucson Indian Training School, the first Protestant educational institution to be established for the Indians in Arizona, still remains the only Protestant boarding school serving the Pima and Papago tribes, representing a population of approximately twelve thousand.

Support of missionary, including maintenance and travel, $1,200.

Scholarship, $100.

Shares in station support, $10 up.

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